

From: Brad Redfearn
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/21/02 3:45pm
Subject: Comments on Microsoft settlement

14 days is too short a time to allow Microsoft (via Windows) to automatically prompt a user to use or switch to a Microsoft product. For many people, this amount of time is not sufficient to have become familiar with the operation of the computer and to have had a chance to explore third-party options for all software/services.

In my opinion, Microsoft should not be able to use Windows in that way at all. If, for example, an OEM wanted to bundle AOL Instant Messenger (or ICQ, or IRC Chat, etc.) instead of MSN messenger, they should be able to do that without Microsoft popping up and asking them to switch without the user initiating it.

It seems to me a likely scenario that a user buys a new computer, learns the interface, gets online, learns to use email, begins to explore the web... And BAM! Two weeks have gone by and they still have no idea what instant messaging is. Before they have had a chance to explore the OEM bundled software, Microsoft steps in and pushes MSN (or whatever) on them.

This is not much better than allowing Microsoft to force OEMs to bundle their "middleware" in the first place. Microsoft should have to compete with other software vendors on even terms--not tie its software products into Windows. In my opinion this means Microsoft should have to offer OEMs a version of Windows stripped of all other Microsoft middleware and online services let the OEMs choose whether to add in Microsoft's offerings or a competitor's (or both). Then Microsoft would have to just compete for OEMs business just like everyone else. They would not have the unfair advantage of automatically being on every system.

I would also like to make the point that many people who are automatically prompted to use a Microsoft product don't realize they are being advertised to.

My two cents.

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